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*The Reasonableness and Origin of Government, and
what ought to be the Behaviour of every Christian
under it.*

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693. c. 20

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

L O R D M A Y O R,

THE

A L D E R M E N and C I T I Z E N S of L o n d o n ,

AT THE

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL, June 11, 1735.

BEING THE

Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession
to the Throne.

By **EDWARD ARROWSMITH, A. M.** K
Rector of St. Olave Hart-Street.

*Publish'd by Order of the Lord-Mayor and Court of
Aldermen.*

L O N D O N:

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B E L L A M Y Mayor.

Tuesday the 17th Day of June, 1735.
and in the Ninth Year of the Reign
of King GEORGE the Second, of
Great-Britain, &c.

IT is Order'd, That the Thanks of this
Court be given to the Reverend Mr. Ar-
rowsmith, for his Sermon preach'd before this
Court, at the *Cathedral Church of St. PAUL*,
on *Wednesday* the Eleventh Instant (being the
Anniversary of his Majesty's happy Accession
to the Throne) and that he be desired to
print the same.

J A C K S O N,



ROMANS XIII. I.

Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers. For there is no Power but of God : The Powers that be, are ordained of God.

SOLOMON, in his *Ecclesiastes* saith, There is a Season and a Time to every Purpose under Heaven ; and amongst the rest, there is a Propriety to be observ'd in Discourse, as well as in Action. There is a Time to keep silence, as well as to speak.

Time was, I freely own, when there was no Occasion greatly to preach up this Doctrine of Submission ; the Powers that *then* were, some of them at least, did not much deserve it ; and the Notions of the Generality of People ran high enough, indeed too high, to want any Thing to excite or encrease them.

But Times now are greatly changed. Though the Powers that *now* are, are not worse, the Peoples No-

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tions of Obedience and Submission to them, are abundantly less: The Doctrines of Liberty and Property have of late Years been so much the Talk of the world, and Mankind have been so much amused with Notions of *Natural Rights*, the End of all Governments being the *Good of Society*, and the reciprocal Obligations of the *Governors* and *Governed*, that they are really got into the other Extreme; and from saying, that no Submission could be too *Much*, would by their Writings and their Discourses, tempt one to think that they look upon no Submission too *Little*.

It is true, these Principles, *viz.* “ the *Rights of Nature*, the End of Governments being the *Good of Society* ”, and the reciprocal Obligations of the *Governors* and *Governed*, are weighty and sacred Things; and when fairly stated, carry a Meaning, which wise and honest Men will ever stand up for: However, even *These*, when thrown out (as I believe they have been) without their proper Guards and Restrictions; though, in the Main, they may have been honestly contended for, they have had the Effect which *Thinking Men* foresaw they would; being all on the side of our Wishes, and favourable to a Scheme we are naturally very fond of: They have been carried farther than perhaps they were ever designed, and the People have thereupon assumed Liberties, which their Teachers would have greatly condemned. Thus it was when those Doctrines (in Comparison of what they are now) were soberly and reasonably advanced; which shews how extremely careful, wise, and good, Men should be, even when they are writing the greatest Truths, especially if those happen to be on the Side of Nature. But since, now that another Set

Set of Men have arose, who not content to tread in the others Steps, have gone far beyond them, and working upon their Materials with a very dishonest Art, have mixed with them *present* Occurrences, and *present* Managements to enliven, and give an Edge to their Discourses, the Passions and the Prejudices of the People are so enflamed, that all sober Notions of Liberty are defaced, and their Heads seem perfectly giddy with Licentiousness. They think so much is their Right, and by one Means or other, are made so jealous of some designed Infringement of it, that they throw off that Decency and Regard for Superiors, which, in a worse State of Things, would be their Due; and are really come to that pass, as not only to despise Governors, but even Government it self. This then being the Case, it cannot be unseasonable, considering the present Occasion of our meeting here, to interpose a little, and to put you in Mind, that it is a Christian Duty to be *subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates.*

You are not to expect that in discoursing upon such a Subject as this, I should enter minutely into the Rights either of the Prince or the People, or mark out the Bounds of Power on one side, or Obedience on the other: For these, though they were not Things too high for me, are what I should not care to meddle with. The Intricacies and Niceties of most Questions serve chiefly to gender Strife; and after all, are of no great use to be known. What therefore I have to say, will be only some plain and common Things concerning Subjection and Fealty to *Governors*; such as the Scriptures teach, and such as it becomes Subjects in all Places, and under all Governments, to practice.

I shall comprise my Discourse under the following Heads :

I. I shall say something concerning the Reasonableness and Origin of Government, and shew in what Sense it is of God, or Divine.

II. When a Government is once fixed and settled, what ought to be the Behaviour of every one under it. After which, I shall conclude with some Reflections suitable to the present Times.

I. Then : I am to say something concerning the Reasonableness and Origin of Government, and shew in what Sense it is said to be of God, or Divine. Now that it is reasonable there should be a Government among Men, or some common Rules to which all within such a certain Limit should be obliged to submit, seems plain from hence ; because otherwise it would be impossible that SOCIETY should be preserved ; and Man, of all other Creatures, seems most calculated for Society, and would always, and of himself, fall naturally into such Measures as would be proper to support it. For Man, though much superior to the Brute Creation in the Endowments of his Mind, is yet inferior to them in many Instances, with respect to his Body ; he is subject to more Weaknesses, is obliged to be used with more Tenderness, and hath a great many more Wants necessary to be supplied, to make Life tolerably easy and pleasant to him. These, one Man, supposing him always to be healthy and well, could never supply himself with, in any tolerable Proportion : It requires more Time, and Strength, and Skill, than one Man can possibly be Master of,

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compleatly to furnish himself with proper Necessaries ; there must be, therefore, many Hands united, and these in various Ways employ'd for the Service and Advantage one of another. By this Means the Abundance of one Man, in one Way, may be a Supply to the Wants of another : And again, their Abundance in another Way, may be a Supply for your Wants ; that so upon the Whole, by an happy Circulation of the several Privileges or Advantages which *Each* is possessed of, *All* may, with more Ease, and in greater Perfection, enjoy whatever Art or Nature can afford. But it is impossible that ever Men should be thus united, or that they should thus become subservient to the interests of one another, if there was not a Government to restrain some, encourage others, and keep the Whole in Order. Men without Government, would be like the Description which *Ovid* gives of the World as it lay in Chaos. All Things would be in the wrong Place ; those got uppermost which should have been lowest ; and these again striving for the Place which Nature seem'd to have designed them for. There would be no Dependence, or Subserviency of one Thing to another ; but All in wild Confusion, falling foul upon, and clashing one with another, would serve to keep up an eternal Struggle.

Not that I think, or that it will follow from hence, that a State of Nature is a State of War. I rather suppose the contrary ; I suppose that Government is so essential to the Well-Being of Man, and results so necessarily from the very Nature and Circumstances of Things, that it may justly be look'd upon as one of the Laws of Nature, or that which right Reason, would at all Times, and in all Places, direct Men

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Men to submit to. And therefore were Men to throw it off, as they would not be in a perfect State of Nature, so might they, without giving Countenance to any such monstrous Assertion (as if that State should be a State of War) feel all the Evils and Inconveniences which I have been describing. However, from hence it follows, with Evidence enough, that if it be reasonable for Men always to chuse to live in Society, it must be equally so to live under Government, since Government is the very Basis of Society.

And as Government is reasonable upon this Account, that without it we either could not be supplied at all, or however not so easily, or so well supplied with the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life; so likewise is it upon another Account, which is, that when we had them, we could not be so *secure* in the Possession of them. Property would be exceeding precarious, and Men would be able to enjoy no longer than they could defend. A strong Man arm'd might, perhaps, keep his Palace, so that his Goods would be in Peace; but it would be no longer than a stronger than he should come upon him, and overcome him, and take from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divide his Spoil. Even in well-regulated Societies, we see People are hardly to be restrained from these Violences; they will rob, and they will revel, in the Possessions of their Neighbours, though it be to the extreme Hazard of their own Lives. How much more Havock of this sort would there be, had they more Chances on their Side; were there no Government to protect us, but every Man's Right lay in the Length of his Sword!

Or

Or supposing Men might, by entering into Measures for their common Defence, screen themselves from such notorious Outrages as these, yet still because there must be a *Commerce*, i. e. a Circulation of Property one amongst another, and where there is this, Differences will happen, and some Persons will think themselves injur'd, and where Questions of Right are to be decided there must be some last Appeal, to which all should be obliged to submit, since no Man is fit to be a Judge in his own Cause, therefore there ought to be a Government, to preside in these Cases, to ascertain every one their Rights and Privileges, and so either prevent, or adjust those Encroachments which would otherwise be made without End. From these Reasons I question not Government had its beginning. Men no sooner saw themselves alive, or however, no sooner saw themselves surrounded with Numbers of the same Species, but they found that *Order* was as necessary as *Food*, that as they could not live without the *One*, so neither without the *Other*, and that if it was desireable to be furnished with any of the Comforts or Privileges of this World, it was but reasonable there should be some common Rules to secure the Possession of them. This was so obvious to the Capacities of all Men, that we find it was as universally complied with as any other Law of Nature, insomuch that there never was any Numbers, or Colonies of Men, that History any where informs us of, but what always flung themselves into some Model or other, had Laws and Regulations not only for their Defence against foreign Invasions, but likewise for the Preservation of Harmony and Peace among themselves. Upon this Account it is that Government is said to be of *Divine Institution*, by which nothing

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more can rationally be meant than this, that it hath its Foundation so evidently in Nature, and is recommended so strongly by the Circumstances, and common Interests of Mankind, that God who made the One must be supposed to have designed the Other. For as *Grotius* in his Book *De Jure Belli & Pacis* saith very well,

Homines non Dei precepto, sed sponte adductos, experimento infirmitatis, familiarum segregum adversus violentiam in Societatem civilem coiisse unde ortum habet potestas Civilis, quam ideo Humanam Ordinationem Petrus vocat, quanquam alibi Divina Ordinatio vocatur, quia Hominum salubre Institutum Deus probavit, i. e. That Men at the first did not enter into civil Society by any positive Command of God, but were led to it, being sensible of their Weakness, of their own accord, that so they might defend themselves against the Violences of roving Clans. Whence it was that Civil Power had its Rise, which therefore St. Peter calls the Ordinance of Man, though elsewhere it is call'd the Ordinance of God, because God approv'd of an Institution so wholesome and advantagious to Mankind.

So that when the *Divine Right of Governors or Government* is asserted, it should not be meant that there is a *Divine Designation* of any Family, or Branch of a Family, to whom the Government of a Nation should be committed, nor any special Direction in what *Manner* Things are to be manag'd, nor any Intimation as to any *Form*. It is to be suppos'd, that the *Rights of Governors* are to be settled as all other *Civil Rights*, that being an human Concern it should be done in an human Way, and that all Nations are at liberty (unless where God immediately interposeth, as was

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was the Case of the *Jews*) to meet, consult, and advise, in what Method they would have their Government, so as may suit best with the Nature of the Place, the Circumstances of the Time, and the Genius of the People. And where-ever Things are so fram'd, though the Contrivance is wholly of Man, yet if they are not like the *Spartans*, which may be rather call'd a Confederacy than a Government, but their Rules are agreeable to the Laws of Nature, being founded upon Justice, Mercy, and Truth, such a Government, let it be *absolute* or *mix'd*, and let who will be vested in the Management of it, *One* or *More*, may justly be said to be of Divine Appointment. It by Supposition serves all the Purposes of Government, is calculated for the Good of those who live under it; and that there should be such a Model as this (no matter in what Shape) is the Voice of Nature, and whatever is truly the Voice of Nature, is truly the Voice of God. And now having said thus much concerning the Reasonableness and Origin of Government, and shew'd in what Sense, and upon what Account, it is of Divine Appointment, I go on to the

Second Head of my Discourse, *viz.* To shew, when once a Government is fix'd and settled, what ought to be a good Christian's Behaviour under it. In the

First Place then, the Right of the Governors to rule over us, ought never to be call'd in question, but whatever it is, or however they came by it, so long as it is consistent with the Ends of Government, ought quietly to be acquiesced in, and submitted to. There could not be greater Usurpers in Nature, than those

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Emperors were, who liv'd at, or before the Time when the Apostle liv'd ; they came to their Dignity not by any *Hereditary Pretence*, not by the *Free Consent* of the People, nor by any other Means which could be said to have the least Appearance of Just and Right. But through Cruelty and Bloodshed, by Menacing some, and Bribing others, and Over-awing all Men by their mercenary Legions, they over-turn'd the ancient Foundations, took away the Authority of the Senate, and, by Degrees, plac'd it all upon themselves. And yet even here, where the Means of obtaining the Sceptre were as foul as foul could be, the Apostle, without any manner of Retrospect to this kind of Doings, directs his *Roman Converts* to be subject to *these higher Powers*. Now this he certainly did upon no other Foot than what I have mention'd, *viz.* That when Things are once settled, and put into a regular Way, it is no part of a *private Man's* Duty to inquire into the Rights of Princes, or by what Title they ascend the Throne, much less to make any Disturbance upon that Account. It is necessary for the *common Good*, that some Body should govern, and be, or they that are in Possession, and do that, are, for any Thing that any *private Man* hath to do or say to the contrary, *rightly* in Possession. There never was any Revolutions in Kingdoms (and there never was any Kingdom but such Revolutions have happen'd in it) I say there never was any such, but the wisest and the best of Subjects have acted as if they thought so, and all Men, sooner or later, as their Passions cool'd, and their Heats grew less, have fallen into the same Measures.

I have not said this, as if I thought it the *only* or the *best* Way upon which might be defended our Allegiance

legiance to the supreme Powers of this Nation. I, for my self, think their Tenure justifiable in all Respects that in reason can justify any Tenure. But what I have said, is for the sake of weak, but well-meaning Christians, who not being able to attend to other Arguments of more Length, and greater Intricacy, may fully comprehend this short and obvious one, and when they are scrupulous about other Things, may rest satisfied with this Declaration of the Apostle.

There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be are ordained of God. But,

2. If it is no Part of the Business of a good Christian to call in question the *Title* of his Governors, it is certainly his Duty to pay a *regular Obedience* to their Laws. Indeed, should any of their Laws prescribe the Doing of a Thing, which, according to the best Judgment we could make, we thought sinful (though even there a Man is not to act as he pleaseth, since a decent Regard is ever to be shewn to Authority) yet surely he cannot be oblig'd to a Compliance, since Innocence is to be preserv'd at all Hazards, and we must obey God rather than Man. But if the Things which they prescribe are in their own Nature indifferent, whether they respect Order in Civil or Ecclesiastical Matters, or appoint certain Restrictions, and Rules under which Trade and Commerce shall be carried on; in short, whatever they be, yet if they are not sinful, though we may not look upon them as the best, and most prudent that might be thought on, yet we ought not openly to oppose them, nor enter into Confederacies, and dark Ways to evade them, but govern our selves fairly

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ly in the Manner that they direct. Human Laws, in this Case, certainly oblige the Conscience, and we ought no more to act in Defiance of *Them*, than in Defiance of the *Laws* of God; no more to walk disorderly, or carry on illicit Practices, than to be profane or intemperate; we sin against the same Authority in both Cases: In the one, not indeed so directly against *God* as the other; but however, in that against the *Ordinance* of *God*, an *Ordinance* to which he hath required us to be subject, not only for *Wrath*, *i. e.* the *Fear* of *Punishment*, but for *Conscience* sake. But,

3. As we ought to submit to their *Laws*, so should we, in all other *Respects*, behave *peaceably* and *quietly*, shewing, upon all Occasions, a proper *Regard* for *Authority*, and honouring the Men for their *Office*. We should not think that our *Tongues* are our own, and that we may censure and find fault as we like; much less should we, under *false Names*, or *no Names*, put about *Stories*, the *Truth* of which is either none, or greatly disguised: For this is a *fly Way* of doing *Mischief*; it poisons the *Minds* of the *People* imperceptibly, and makes them *uneasy* and *jealous* oftentimes for nothing. Formerly it used to be thought a *Piece* of *Undecency* to look too narrowly into the *Conduct* of *Princes*; and that instead of exposing them, Men should rather cast a *Veil* over their *Infirmities*; and surely, if not to touch upon their *Failings* with *Tenderness*, be a *Breach* of *good Manners*, it must be something worse not to do them *Justice*. To spread *Reports* against them by *Hear-say*, or upon *Guess*, or if true, yet greatly aggravated, is more than an *Undecency*, it is a *Crime*, and is expressly forbidden

bidden in the Word of God ; where it is laid, *Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People.*

This then is the Behaviour which a good Christian ought to put on under any Government he happens to live ; he ought “ to acquiesce in the *Right* of his “ *Governors*, to be *obedient* to all their *Laws* that are “ *about Things of an indifferent Nature* ”, and not set himself lightly to *oppose*, or to bring into disrepute their *Administration*. How far further our *Obedience* is to go, or where it is to stop, I have no *Design* to enquire ; this is sufficient for all the *Purposes* of *publick Peace* and *publick Happiness* ; and as the *People* that do *less* than this, do not do their *Duty* ; so the *Princes* that *expect*, or depend upon *more*, may, and for ought I know, deserve to find themselves *mistaken*.

And now, as I think, his *Present Majesty*, in whom is lodged the *supreme Power* of this *Nation*, is clearly entitled to the *Obedience* of the *People*, upon all these *Accounts*, *First*, With respect to the *Right* he hath to rule over them ; *Secondly*, With respect to the *Laws* that are required to be observed ; and, *Thirdly*, With respect to his *Manner* of *Government*. So, would to God I had nothing to accuse my *Nation* of, with regard to any of the fore-going *Particulars* ; and that they were no Way wanting in that *Duty* which they owe their *Governors*. Indeed, as to the *Right* of the *Prince*, that *Struggle*, I am willing to believe, is near an *End*, it being a *Thing* pretty generally *acquiesced* in. And, as to the *Obedience* due to the *Laws*, I hope there is not much *Ground* of *Complaint*, since no *Man* of *Character* cares

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to appear in an open Violation of them. But as to a peaceable, quiet, and respectful *Deportment* under Government, What shall I say? Do I commend you for this? I commend you not. Who would ever think that speaking Evil of Dignities is so blackly characterized in the Scriptures! Who, for some Years past, hath heard the Clamours that have been rais'd against the Government by a restless Set of Men, whose Businesse it seems to have been, to pry into its Weakness, to charge it with *Fancied Faults*, or aggravate its *real ones*, and to enflame, by their seditious Libels, the Minds of the People!

I know all this hath been sanctified with the popular Name of Patriotism, and their Measures justified under a Colour of a Zeal for Liberty. Glorious Characters, where they are deserved! and for which the Persons that contend, ought to have, when there is Occasion, when Liberty is strick at, and their Country is in Danger, all possible Encouragement and Commendation. But though in difficult Times, when all Things are running to ruin, when the Laws are dispensed with, and Peoples Properties are render'd precarious; for a Man to stand up in the Defence of his Country, is truly heroick: Yet, at other Times, when there is no such general Distress, when the Governors have no bad Views, and Things, in the Main, are kept upon the old Foundations, for any one to clamour, and write, and distinguish himself by a violent Opposition, is quite a different Thing; this is not Patriotism, but Faction; not a Love of his Country, but the vile Efforts of an envious, or ambitious, or disappointed Spirit.

What

What though there should be some wrong Steps took by an Administration, and these should be attended with some real Inconveniences? What though our Governors may not have been prudent enough to foresee the Dangers threatening the State, or not active or resolute enough to ward them off? What then? Is it fair to swell their Mole-hills into Mountains, to heighten their Faults with all the invidious Colourings imaginable, and infuse Jealousies and Fears, and Discontents among the People, as if their All was going to be sacrificed. I know no just Title that any Man, or Number of Men, have to Infallibility. We see in our *own* private Affairs, how apt we are to mistake; and notwithstanding all our Care and Prudence to pursue Measures that turn out to our Disadvantage; what Allowances then should be made to *Those* who have the Concerns of a Nation upon their Hands, and have all the Art of *cunning* Men, and the Power of *wicked* ones engaged in a Confederacy to defeat their Counsels. There certainly is a wide Difference (and wise and good Men will always make it) betwixt those who act wrong by *Mistake*, and those who offend of *malicious Wickedness*: And if the latter are to be given up, the former have a fair Claim to Patience and Candour, and fair Usage: This, I say, is due to them, even upon the Supposition that their Measures were not quite so Defensible. Not that I know, or even suspect, that they are so: I freely own, I am no great Judge; I always was short-sighted in these Kind of Matters, and never desire to be over-well versed in them.

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But however, let this be as it will, let their Faults be fewer or more, lesser or greater ; there are still Blessings and Happinesses enough, for which we may, and, indeed, we ought, to be abundantly thankful. What is there truly valuable under the very best of Governments, that You and I, and all of Us, do not enjoy under This ? Have we not all the common Protection of the Laws ? Are not those Laws such as we, by our Representatives, consent to ? Is not every Man's Property secured to him inviolable ? And have we not *All*, the Liberty of serving God according to our Consciences ? As *Samuel* once said to the Children of *Israel*, so I may now demand, Whose Ox hath been taken, or, whose Ass hath been taken ? or, who of us all hath been defrauded or oppressed ? If not, wherefore all this Uneasiness ? What is it we would have ? Is it only that Things may be *better* ? Why, upon this Foot a People never can be satisfied ; since there never was, never can be, a Time when Things may not be managed *better*. Or however this be, such a Spirit of Censure, of Slander, of Faction, as is now gone forth, is not the Way to *mend* any Thing, but to make all Things *worse*. It tends only to make the People heady, high-minded, full of themselves, and impatient of Restraint ; and the Consequence of this, first or last, must be Tumults, Confusion, and every evil Work. We have seen it already in *some* Instances, and if such Methods are continued, shall see it in *more*.

When Things therefore are well in the Main, it is the Interest, as well as Duty, of Subjects to be quiet and easy, lest by struggling too much, and pushing

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too far, instead of removing one Evil, they run themselves into another, and a worse. The Body Politick is, in some Respects, like the Body Natural; when it is sick, Medicine may be applied, and this stronger and stronger, as the Malady may require. But to do this when it is well, to do it when there is no Reason, and beyond all Reason, is to do Mischief under a Notion of Curing, and to *ruin* the Constitution you would pretend to *save*.

I hope it will not be said, that I have been talking of Things beyond my Line; or that I would recommend my self to my Superiors by an over-officious Zeal; there is no Ground for any such Suggestion; I am not sensible of any *very* particular Attachments I have; their *Persons* I know little of, their *Favours* nothing at all, any otherwise than as with you, and the rest of my Fellow-Subjects, I enjoy the common Benefit of their Protection; the Happiness of which, because I am greatly sensible of my self, therefore I could wish others were so too, since were People once thoroughly posses'd with such a Notion, as it would silence all factious Murmurings for *little* Mismanagements, and teach us to distinguish *great* Things from *small*, so would it be a Means of lengthning our Tranquility, and promoting the Welfare and Prosperity of this Kingdom; then would this Day be a Day of Thanksgiving on all Sides, since I believe little else is wanting to make his present Majesty a *great King*, and Us an *happy People*.

Let the Conclusion then be this,

Wherefore, beloved, building up your selves in your most holy Profession, praying in the Holy

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Ghost, keep your selves in the Love of God, and in Obedience to the King, whom he hath set over us. — Study to be Quiet. — Do your own Business. — Follow after the Things that make for Peace. — Beware of Evil-Workers. — And meddle not with those that are given to change.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding great Joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and for ever.

Amen.

F I N I S.

